

## *Litir do Luchd-Ionnsachaidh* le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

*A special programme, in the form of a “letter”, written and compiled by Roddy Maclean, and specifically aimed at Gaelic learners who already have some knowledge of the language. A short vocabulary and comments on points of grammar and figures of speech are included with the text. If you have comments, Roddy can be contacted by e-mail at [roddy.maclean@bbc.co.uk](mailto:roddy.maclean@bbc.co.uk) \**

Tha e iongantach cho sean 's a tha cuid de na h-ainmean a th' againn ann an Gàidhlig airson lus. Rinn an sgrìobhadair Ròmanach, Pliny, am fear nas sine, a bha beò anns a' chiad linn as dèidh Chrìosda, rannsachadh air mòran rudan co-cheangailte ri nàdar. Agus sgrìobh e mu dheidhinn lus, a tha a' fàs gu h-àrd ann an craobhan, dha robh na draoidhean Ceilteach a' toirt urram thar chàich.

‘ “*Omnia sanantem*” *appellantes suo vocabulo*’, sgrìobh e, a' ciallachadh, “nan cànan fhèin canaidh iad ‘uil’-ìoc’ ris.” Tha sin a' ciallachadh *an lus a tha a' slànachadh a h-uile nì*. Agus 's e sin an t-ainm a th' air ann an Gàidhlig fhathast an-diugh, faisg air dà mhìle bliadhna bho chuir Pliny a shreath leabhraichean air nàdar ri chèile – *uil’-ìoc*. Tha teans ann gum bi sibh nas eòlaiche air fo ainm Beurla – *mistletoe*.

Seo na sgrìobh Pliny mu dheidhinn. *Bidh na h-ìobairtean agus a' chuir deiseil fon chraoibh agus bidh iad a' toirt leotha dà tharbh geal...; bidh draoidh, ann an aodach geal, a' dìreadh na craoibhe agus a' gearradh an uil’-ìoc dheth le sgian òir; bidh e air a ghlacadh ann an siota gheal. An uairsin bidh iad ag ìobradh nan tarbh.*

Thuir Pliny gu robh na seann Cheiltich dhen bheachd gun leanadh deagh fhortan air a sin leis cho naomh 's a bha an t-uil’-ìoc. Chanadh iad, nan òladh boireannach, aig nach robh leanabh, deoch dheth, gum fàsadh i torrach. Agus bhiodh e ag obair mar leigheas an aghaidh a h-uile puinnsein. Bha na draoidhean gu math dèidheil air, agus 's e ainm eile Gàidhlig air a shon – *draoidh-lus*.

Tha treas ainm air cuideachd – *sùgh-dharaich*. Tha “sùgh” a' ciallachadh *snodhach*, neo an lionn a tha am broinn craoibhe, anns a bheil am biadh. Agus bidh sibh eòlach air a' chraoibh-dharaich, tha mi cinnteach. Do na draoidhean, 's e craobh naomh a bh' innte, gu h-àraidh nan robh uil’-ìoc a' fàs oirre. Tha an t-ainm *sùgh-dharaich* a' dèanamh ciall, ma-thà, leis gum bi an t-uil’-ìoc a' toirt sùgh às a' chraoibh air a bheil e a' fàs, airson a chumail fhèin beò. 'S e faoighiche a th' ann, neo co-dhiù leth-fhaoighiche, air sgàth 's gum bi e a' dèanamh beagan bìdh dha fhèin leis a' chlorofail a th' anns na duilleagan.

Chan eil an t-uil’-ìoc cho cumanta ann an Alba 's a tha e ann an Sasainn ach, far an robh e a' fàs, rinn daoine feum dheth. Sgrìobh Tòmas Pennant ann an seachd ceud deug, seachdad 's a dhà (1772) gu robh daoine ga chleachdadh airson leigheas a dhèanamh air fiabhrasan is tinneas eile. Anns an naoidheamh linn deug, bhathar ga chleachdadh fhathast ann am Moireibh, faisg air Eilginn, far an robh e a' fàs.

Agus aig deireadh an naoidheamh linn deug, dh'innis an Dtr. Donnchadh MacGriogair don Chomann Mheidiceach Chailleannach mu bhoireannach a bha a' fuireach ann an Inbhir Nis nuair a bha e òg. Dhèanadh i tì leis an uil'-ìoc, agus i a' dèanamh dheth gu robh i math dhi, leis gu robh i a' fuiling le frith-bhualadh cridhe. Ach bhiodh a caraidean a' tarraing aiste, gu h-àraidh leis gu robhar a' dèanamh ceangal eile eadar an lus agus gnothaichean a' chridhe. Tuigidh sibh gu bheil mi a' ciallachadh a' cheangail a th' ann eadar *mistletoe* agus pògan aig àm na bliadhn'-ùire!

'S iomadh rud a chaidh a shlànachadh le pòg agus, fiù 's nuair a tha ìocshlaint ann airson a h-uile rud ann am bùth a' cheimigeir, seach gu h-àrd ann an craobhan, 's dòcha gu bheil an t-ainm uil'-ìoc fhathast gu math freagarrach airson an luis àraidh seo.

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**Faclan na seachdaine:** nàdar: *nature*; uil'-ìoc: *mistletoe* (lit. "all-heal"); a' slànachadh: *healing*; ìobairt: *sacrifice*; cuirm: *feast*; tarbh: *bull*; a' dìreadh: *climbing, ascending*; sgian òir: *a golden knife*; naomh: *sacred*; torrach: *fertile, fecund*; draoidh-lus: *mistletoe* (lit. "druid's plant"); sùgh-dharaich: *mistletoe* (lit. "oak-sap"); snodhach: *sap*; lionn: *liquid*; clorofail: *chlorophyll*; fiabhlasan: *fevers*; an Comann Meidiceach Cailleannach: *the Caledonian Medical Society*.

**Abairtean na seachdaine:** a bha beò anns a' chiad linn as dèidh Chrìosda: *who lived in the 1<sup>st</sup> Century AD*; dha robh na draoidhean Ceilteach a' toirt urram thar chàich: *which the Celtic druids honoured above all others*; bho chuir Pliny a shreath leabhraichean ri chèile: *since Pliny compiled his series of books (volumes)*; bidh e air a ghlacadh ann an siota gheal: *it is caught in a white sheet*; bidh iad ag ìobradh nan tarbh: *they sacrifice the bulls*; bhiodh e ag obair mar leigheas an aghaidh a h-uile puinnsein: *it would work as a cure for all poisons*; 's e faoighiche a th' ann, neo co-dhiù leth-fhaoighiche: *it is a parasite or, at least, a semiparasite ("faoighiche" once referred only to humans living at another's expense but, as happened with "parasite", the meaning has been widened to take in other forms of life)*; leis gu robh i a' fuiling le frith-bhualadh cridhe: *because she was suffering from palpitations of the heart*; ceangal eile eadar an lus agus gnothaichean a' chridhe: *other links between the plant and affairs of the heart*; 's iomadh rud a chaidh a shlànachadh le pòg: *many a thing has been healed by a kiss*; fiù 's nuair a tha ìocshlaint ann airson a h-uile rud ann am bùth a' cheimigeir: *even when there is a medicine for everything in the chemist's shop*.

**Puing ghràmair na seachdaine:** leis gum bi an t-uil'-ìoc a' toirt sùgh às a' chraoibh air a bheil e a' fàs: *because the mistletoe takes sap from the tree on which it grows. Are you happy with the difference between the prepositions "à" (or "às") and "bho"?* À/às means "out of" or "from the inside of", whereas bho (or "o") means "from" or "from the outside of". That is why I said às a chraoibh, rather than bhon chraoibh because the sap is coming from within the tree. So, we might say, thàinig e às a' choille (he came out of the wood) but thill e bho oir na coille nuair a chual' e mi (he returned from the edge of the wood when he heard me). The concept of belonging to a place is also covered by à/às (ie you come from within the place), as in the frequently-asked, cò às a tha thu? (where are you from?); tha mi à Glaschu (I am from Glasgow). It is usually às in front of a vowel or before gach and à before a noun, but this rule is not universal and there is flexibility to use either (which should be good news to the learner!). Finally, à/às is employed in some important idioms, often conjugated to form a prepositional pronoun. There is one of these in the Litir and I would like you to find it and work out what it means. All will be revealed next week!

**Gnàths-cainnt na seachdaine:** Bhathar ga chleachdadh fhathast: *it was still being used (it was still in use)*.

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